

# DEBUNKING 7 COMMON MYTHS ABOUT RACISM & RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

The hateful institutions of racism and racial discrimination are propped up by a set of myths and stereotypes that suppress people from speaking out and impede informed dialog and the quest for meaningful solutions. One of the things you can do as an employer to promote understanding and racial equality is to post this infographic debunking 7 of the most common myths about racism and racial discrimination in your workplace in a conspicuous location where it can be seen by all employees.

**Except for a few bad apples, racism doesn't exist in Canada.**

Recent polls show that while 84% of Canadians don't think they're racist:

\*50% believe it's OK to have racist thoughts

\*32% make racist comments

\*27% agree with racial stereotypes

**Canadians are "colour blind" & don't even notice race.**

Racial bias is wired into people, often in ways too subtle to notice. Ask yourself:

\*Do you pull your purse closer when in an elevator with a black man?

\*Do you go to the other side of the street if you see people of colour coming?

\*Do you assume persons of colour are guilty of a crime just because they've been arrested?

\*Do you feel the impulse to ask a person of colour "where are you from?"; would you feel that same impulse with a white person?

**Good people can't be racist.**

Racism isn't just a product of hateful actions & words. We can do great harms not just from our intention but also our inattentions to the social forces causing others to suffer.

**Mentioning the existence of or taking proactive measures to combat racism or racial discrimination is reverse racism against white people.**

Racism is based on systemic oppression exercised by people in power; because white people in Canada have and continue to hold that power, the notion of reverse racism against whites is a myth; combatting racism is really about eliminating oppression resulting from disparity in power.

**Racialized people play the "race card" to manipulate people or systems to get what they want.**

The phrase "race card" is dismissive of the fact that the world is not colour-blind & that people of colour must draw attention to race to raise awareness of racism & racial discrimination & achieve equality.

**Racialized people have a "chip on their shoulder."**

Feeling the need to protest & speak out comes from the recognition of how racism is embedded not just in people's minds but also education, employment, law enforcement & other social institutions.

**The only way to create a colour-blind world is by colour-blind policies.**

Although this assertion sounds right, the reality is that colour-blind policies actually reinforce racial injustices & keep racial minorities at a disadvantage. Examples: Colour-blind seniority systems tend to protect white workers from layoffs because senior employees are usually white & colour-blind college admissions favor white students because of their earlier educational advantages.